



## Snowy winter wonderland

Mr. Freeze blasted Kitchener-Waterloo in early January and left behind scary and beautiful images.

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# Spoke

## West is the best

Brent Gerhart takes a look at the first half of the NBA season.

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## Clothing situation under control

After a host of problems, LASA and police foundations students are getting answers.

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Monday, February 7, 2005

Conestoga College, Kitchener

36th Year — No. 5

## Bus riders may be left in the cold if drivers strike

By MELISSA HANCOCK

Riders of Grand River Transit (GRT) may soon have to find alternative methods of transportation.

Chief executive officer of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Kitchener-Waterloo region Mike Murray said bus drivers have set Feb. 14 as the date for a strike.

The contract for GRT bus drivers expired on Dec. 31, 2004, he said, and 98 per cent of workers voted in favour of a strike.

"We are in the stage of active negotiations," Murray said. "I'm optimistic we will get to where we need to be and have an agreement settled."

An online newsletter from GRT workers stated there is, "... a gap between what we bring home and the spiraling cost of living." It also stated they, "... demand a contract that represents our true worth."

About 36,000 passengers ride the GRT buses every day, he said, and people would have to find their own way to get around if the drivers strike.

President of the CAW Kitchener-Waterloo region Rick Lonergan said he "led the way" to the 98 per cent in-favour vote.

"Things are going well so far," he said. "So, there's no need for bad-mouthing right now."

He said last year the average bus driver's contract included a benefits package and a wage of about \$20.64 per hour.

"It's all part of our negotiations," he said.

First-year computer programming/analyst student at Conestoga College, John Lafleche, said he uses public transportation twice every day.

"I'd be staying at home," he said. "I'm not a morning person, so I wouldn't be able to get to class on time."

When asked if taking a cab to and

from school would be too expensive, Lafleche said, "Good grief yes! I don't have the money for that."

GRT driver Greg, who did not want to give his last name, said he has been a bus driver for about 23 years and is not in favour of the possible strike.

"Nobody's in favour of the strike," he said. "It's just a procedure."

He said the last time there was a strike it only lasted for half a day.

"If a strike lasts half a day, then whose fault is it?" he said. "Why wait until the last minute (for negotiations)."

Third-year computer engineering student, Hugo Rodriguez, 21, said he rides the bus every day to school from Fairview Park Mall and doesn't have access to a car.

"I'd have to walk," he said. "Cabs are about \$15 from where I live. I think maybe I'd have to buy a bike."

Mahir Stambolic, 22, a student at Conestoga, said he doesn't use public transit very often, but has to right now because his car has broken down.

He said he lives at the Conestoga residence and would not like having to walk to get groceries.

"If you need bread, you need to walk," Stambolic said. "I'd have to walk to Zehrs and walk all the way back with all my groceries."

Wilfrid Laurier University student Devi Devendran, 22, said she only rides the bus about four times a week, but a strike would force a lot of schedule shifting.

"I'd have to find another way to get to school and to work," she said.

Her parents would have to pick her up and drop her off, she said, because taking a cab would be too expensive.

"I just don't know how it would work. There would be a lot of people rearranging their schedules."

## Students finally get hot water

By JENNIFER HOWDEN

After five months, all residents at Conestoga College's Residence and Conference Centre can finally have a hot shower, after a major water problem was fixed on Jan. 26.

Many residents had been forced to live with little or no hot water since September.

Conestoga residence general manager, John Kobylnik, said there were multiple problems but the residence was doing everything it could to fix it.

"Since the beginning of the year there has been a list of things that have been done. We've had all kinds of contractors coming in and giving us different solutions and we've been doing it but nothing was completely working," he said.

Figuring out exactly what rooms

were having the problem was difficult because there was no definite pattern. One room would be getting no hot water and yet all the rooms surrounding it were fine. Kobylnik did notice that if one room had a problem then the same room on the other floors would have the problem. He also noticed the last four rooms of each floor seemed to have the most problems.

Residence tried many things to get the hot water fixed including opening and closing the water valves to get proper water flow to the rooms and installing a bigger water pump.

They also noticed the cartridges behind the shower nozzle were breaking down which meant cold water was coming in and hot water wasn't.

Continued on Page 2



(Photo by Ryan Connell)

Jay Theobald, a second-year apprenticeship student, sands a piece of wood in the woodworking building on Feb. 1. As well as the two diploma woodworking programs at Conestoga, the college also offers apprenticeship programs like cabinet making, and will offer a degree program in 2006.

## Woodworking degree to be offered in 2006

By RYAN CONNELL

Plans to offer a four-year woodworking degree program have been pushed back until September 2006 because not enough people applied for September 2004.

The program received approximately 15 applicants, which was half the number needed.

Michael McClements, the associate vice-president of engineering, information technology and trades and apprenticeship, said one of the reasons why they weren't able to properly recruit people for the program was because it was approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities so late in the year that the college missed the opportunity to advertise to high school students. As well, McClements said that high school students aren't being properly informed about the wood industry and college degrees.

"We have work to do on marketing college degrees because they're not well understood in the public arena," he said. "The general lack of awareness about the degrees has resulted in us not being able to generate the required applicant pool to allow us to run this degree."

McClements said they plan to

create more awareness about the wood industry with the help of the Wood Manufacturing Council (WMC), a council that is funded by the federal government. WMC's mandate is to plan, develop and implement human resources strategies that support the long-term growth and competitiveness of Canada's advanced wood products manufacturing industry and meet the developmental needs of its workforce. Pamphlets were also distributed to high schools educating students about the wood industry and the job possibilities.

McClements said that with the help of WMC they plan to inform high school students that baccalaureate degrees in the wood field now exist. Previously, the only other degree program that comes close is a wood sciences degree offered by the University of British Columbia.

"The public isn't aware of the industry and the opportunities that exist within the industry, so what we're doing at the present time through the Wood Manufacturing Council is creating the awareness that this \$15-billion industry in Canada is very healthy," McClements said. "The wood industry says they can't find enough skilled people and

they go to institutions like ours, and virtually every graduate we produce probably has more than one choice of a job because there is such a demand for these people."

Mark Bramer, the program coordinator for the woodworking degree program, said he was disappointed that the program wasn't offered in September, but he is optimistic that the promotion they are planning to do will attract a lot of students.

Bramer said the degree would steer people in the direction of wood engineers where they would not only learn the skills to make products themselves but would also gain the knowledge of how to organize a company that will produce the product in an efficient manner.

"What we're really looking at is the need for wood engineers and currently the universities are not tapping into that area," Bramer said. "You're not only selling them a wood program, but you're selling them an industry in a sense."

Conestoga College currently offers a two-year diploma in woodworking technology and a three-year diploma in woodworking technology with a co-op component.



## Now deep thoughts ...with Conestoga College

Random questions answered by random students

How do you beat  
the winter blues?



"Sex, and lots of it."  
**Barb Pauli,**  
first-year LASA/police  
foundations

"Doing doughnuts when  
there's snow in the  
parking lot."  
**Marc Hallman,**  
first-year graphic design



"Going skiing, having fun,  
going out with friends, lis-  
tening to music and forget-  
ting about the weather."  
**Rona Kaimi,**  
second-year early  
childhood education

"Relax in my kitchen with  
my patio set and my feet  
in the kitty litter box with  
my hydroponics  
equipment shining on me."  
**Jessie Bramhill,**  
first-year LASA/police  
foundations



"I teach people how to ski."  
**Ryan Molyneaux,**  
first-year LASA/police  
foundations

"Work out. This year I don't  
have a tanning member-  
ship. In the  
winter you don't get as  
much Vitamin B, so that  
can cause depression."  
**Jack Jelinski,**  
mechanical technology  
automated manufacturing



Smile Conestoga, you could be our next respondent!

## Conestoga residence fixes hot water problem

Continued from Page 1

Maintenance workers replaced about 12 cartridges and more were ordered to be installed in the rest of the rooms that were having the problem.

During the summer months, the residence operates as a hotel and Kobylnik said they didn't have any problems during that time.

"With the hotel guests it's not really a problem because they are all showering at different times. With the students you have the majority getting up at 7 and 8 a.m. and so everyone is using the water at the same time which contributes to the problem and just made the cartridges break down even more," he said.

Although residence was doing everything it could to fix the water problem, there were many students who were going through the school year with no hot water.

Second-year public relations student, Connie Coggan, had gone without hot water since September. She did have a brief time in November where her water was hot but it didn't last very long.

"I definitely took a lot of cold showers," she said. "There is nothing harder than trying to get out of bed for an 8:30 a.m. class knowing you are going into a freezing cold shower and then walking to school in the cold."

Coggan and her roommate had to find hot water wherever they could get it.

"My roommate showered in her friend's room a lot and I showered at the rec centre on multiple occasions. I was always wondering where my next shower would come from," she said.

This is the third year Coggan has lived in residence and she has never had a problem with the hot water. She also stayed in residence over the summer and, again, there were no water problems at that time.

On Jan. 26, the water was shut off for more maintenance. The pressure relief valve was removed because of a five-pound drop in pressure to the system and the hot and cold water pressure was balanced.

"The rooms where we got the



(Photo by Jennifer Howden)

Some students were forced to take cold showers because hot water was not getting to some of the rooms at Conestoga College's Residence and Conference Centre.

major complaints are now fixed," said Kobylnik.

Coggan couldn't have been happier when she realized she was finally getting hot water.

"I honestly didn't believe it. I'm so terrified that it's going to go away again. But I get so excited to shower now, which sounds ridiculous, but you just can't understand until you go without it for so long. It has really improved my mood and I've made it to class on time more often because of how much easier it is to motivate myself to get out of bed," she said.

Coggan said she had thought about asking for her money back because of the hot water problem but said she didn't actually ask because she didn't know what her rights were.

"That thought crossed my mind every morning as I arrived to class after a cold shower and looked at my classmates, also living in residence, who had obviously enjoyed a hot shower," she said. "It's not right that I paid the exact same amount of money as everyone else in the building, and had to live without regular hot water for five months."

Although Coggan knows the problem wasn't residence's fault,

she feels they could have handled the situation a bit differently.

"As a public relations student I think there were a lot of things residence could have done to make the situation better," she said. "We have lounges with showers in them that could have been designated for students without hot water or they could have given us an update on the situation more often. Even things like overnight passes (so she wouldn't have to pay if a friend stayed the night) that would show residence cared really could have made the five months better. The fact that I received nothing to compensate for my loss has really been the largest disappointment."

### Residence's tsunami fundraiser nets \$655

By ALEXANDRA MASTRONARDI

Who says college students are cheap?

The Conestoga Residence and Conference Centre raised \$655 for victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami in southeast Asia.

Students donated \$105 more than the residence's goal of \$550.

The general manager of the residence, John Kobylnik, said they were competing with other campus living centres in the province to see who could raise the most money.

"The last figures I saw, Conestoga was number 1," he said. "We're definitely among the top."

Ashleigh Latimer, an early childhood education student, said she donated to the fundraiser to help a victim she's known since her childhood.

"My friend's brother moved over there and I wanted to donate whatever I could afford in hopes it will reach him," she said.

"I hope I was able to help him and the other victims."

The residence encouraged students to donate by pinning up posters and sending flyers to each room.

A donation bin was set up at the front desk and staff also went door-to-door collecting money.

## Changes for health office

By TIM MURPHY

Conestoga College's health office located at the Doon campus has moved under the wing of Student Services, in what a college VP said is a logical move.

Fred Harris, vice-president of student affairs, said in the fall semester, the college moved the health office from the occupational health and safety administration to Student Services.

"One reason why it was a good time to do it was the infrastructure for Student Services had been enhanced," Harris said.

A number of new administrative positions in Student Services accommodated the move.

He said he could only surmise it landed under the occupational health and safety designation because the health office may have started as more of a first-aid station. The move is because of a lot

of growth in the last decade and because it has undergone renovations and staff increases.

"I have no idea why the college put it there, that goes back into the mists of time," he said.

Harris said the administrative change has had no effect on students or staff working in the health office.

"I think in terms of how it services the students, it hasn't had any significant impact up until this point."

One of the new positions created to accommodate the administrative move is a new executive director of Student Services, Jacqueline McLaren.

"I do have some background working from that perspective," McLaren said. One of her previous jobs was managing Grand River Hospital's mental health services.

McLaren started in her new position on Dec. 13.



# Clothing fundraiser now under control

By JEN GALHARDO

You may have seen a few posters around the Doon campus of Conestoga College regarding problems with clothing ordered as a fundraiser for the law and security administration and police foundations programs.

Nelofer Ahmed, a second-year student in police foundations and president of the Emergency Response Club, sold clothing to students in the two programs to raise money for a much-needed dummy for the students in police foundations, law and security administration and pre-service fire-fighting education and training.

Ahmed met with Snap Productions in Toronto to order clothing and discuss pricing and explained that this was for fundraising purposes.

The employee for Snap Productions neglected to tell Ahmed that the prices quoted didn't include taxes or freight charges and that every time a sweatshirt colour was changed there was a fee. As a result, Ahmed said she didn't collect enough money from the students and was left short.

As a result, Ahmed decided to cancel the orders with Snap Productions and go to Bodnar's Distributing in Kitchener.

Ahmed said the employee from Bodnar's Distributing only charged her GST on the clothing. More than 200 items of clothing were ordered with some articles priced at \$43.

"That was fine. I (decided I) would

just pay the \$500 (to cover the GST) out of my own pocket," she said.

At this point, she said, Christmas was coming and she just wanted to get the clothes to the students as soon as possible.

"I felt really bad because I made students so unhappy."

However, things weren't going to get better. When the clothes arrived, Ahmed discovered that some orders were wrong, items were missing, some names were spelled wrong and the clothes were not good quality, she said.

**"I've done some good things and some bad things and I am just going to take it as a learning experience."**

*Nelofer Ahmed,  
police foundations student*

In addition to this Bodnar's Distributing did not have all the clothing attire that Snap Productions offered, such as boxers, so Ahmed said she began refunding students out of her own pocket, once again. She said she is still negotiating with Bodnar's Distributing about refunds, however students want their money now.

"Students were freaking out," she said.

As a result, Ahmed has placed posters around the school to let students know that the problems with the clothing are being taken care of.

"If students e-mail me, I e-mail them back right away and deal with it."

According to Ahmed, this is not the first year there have been problems with the clothing order. For the past two years there have been problems with pricing where the company did not give the right quote.

For students with wrong orders, Ahmed said if they are not happy they should come see her and she will refund them their money or offer them something else because she does have a few extra pieces of clothing left.

To top it off, the reason the fundraiser was held was to purchase a new dummy for the program, but that is no longer needed. The one piece of good news is that the Alumni Association of Conestoga voted in favour of purchasing the dummy for the programs, said Monica Himmelman, development and alumni relations officer at Conestoga.

As a result the proceeds from a Dec. 2 Emergency Response party, which were to be used to purchase the dummy, can now be used elsewhere.

Some students in the Student Volunteer Management Committee of the police foundations program, which is in charge of volunteering, have suggested using that extra money to provide refunds to students for the wrong clothing, said Ahmed. This is still under consideration. Despite all the controversy, Ahmed remains upbeat.

"I've done some good things and some bad thing and I am just going to take it as a learning experience."

# Survey to help modify workload formula

By DENISE MULLER

Faculty at colleges across Ontario have until Feb. 15 to fill out an online workload survey for information gathering by a taskforce put together by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and Colleges Compensation and Appointments council (management).

The 20-minute survey will help the taskforce accumulate faculty workload information necessary to modify a workload formula set by management and OPSEU years ago.

The taskforce includes three people from OPSEU and three people from management.

The management representatives were selected from various colleges that represent northern, western and eastern Ontario.

The formula calculates the number of hours a college faculty member should be working each week. For example, it takes into account time for in-class teaching, marking and meeting with students. The maximum number of hours faculty can be scheduled to work is 44 hours a week. Walter Boettger, president of Local 237, said some faculty members at Conestoga College have had to put in anywhere from 50 to 70 hours a week.

"They're saying it's too much," said Boettger. "The formula's flawed and it doesn't reflect the (actual time spent working by teachers)."

Information from the survey, along with workload diaries that some faculty have been asked to keep, will be presented by the bargaining team to management to support the claim that current workloads are excessive and that the formula needs to be revamped.

Boettger said the biggest problem with the workload is that over the years class sizes, in-class teaching hours and evaluation hours have increased. As a result, teachers are starting to feel the

effects of going beyond the parameter hours set out by the workload formula.

The collective agreement expired Jan. 1, and a notice to bargain was served to management. The contract does not run out until Aug. 31, but negotiations must start before then to reach an agreement.

Evidence will need to be provided at the negotiations to show that there is an issue with the workloads.

"If you can provide pertinent data to support your issues, it's all helpful," said Boettger. "Right now it's all on the bargaining team's shoulders to assemble the information into a package that's presentable to management."

But a heavy workload isn't the only thing that will be on the table. Salary is the runner-up, followed by benefits.

College teachers should be earning between that of the highest paid high school teacher and that of the lowest paid university professor. Currently, most college teachers are making closer to or the same as high school teachers.

Instead of having a whole host of items to negotiate, the spotlight will be mainly on two issues.

"You'll find that this round of bargaining is dually focused — workload and salary," Boettger said.

He said management may or may not agree to the changes, but said it depends on funding as well.

"It's unlikely that you always get what you're asking for in the bargaining process."

The union would like to see a revised formula with less marking hours for teachers and smaller class sizes. The formula may also have to be made program specific, since some programs require more evaluation time than others.

Negotiations will begin after all the workload information has been compiled and presented to management.

# \$10,000 trust fund guarantees scholarship for 10 years

By MELISSA HANCOCK

For the next 10 years, a student in the business administration — materials and operations management program at Conestoga College will be guaranteed a scholarship of \$1,000.

Materials management teacher Paul Knight said the Purchasing Management Association of Canada (PMAC) has provided the scholarship for about 20 years to a second-year student who is taking the principles of buying course, which has an additional cost of about \$200 over and above tuition. The student also has to be a member of the PMAC, which costs about \$60 extra and the student must have achieved the highest mark in the principles of buying course.

A newsletter on Conestoga's website states, "The (PMAC) association views Conestoga's materials management program as dedicated to high educational standards preparing future professionals. Conestoga has more PMAC student members than any other post-secondary institution in Canada and is the only Canadian college to earn PMAC recognition for the principles of buying course."

"I don't twist their arms," Knight

said about his students taking the extra course and becoming a member of PMAC. "Most students are smart enough to know it will be beneficial."

This past school year, every student enrolled in the principles of buying course, about 46 students, received their certificates, he said, and that was a very proud moment.

"We all work very hard," he said. "It's not easy and the students will attest to that!"

A trust fund of \$10,000 has been set up to ensure that students will still be awarded the scholarship 10 years from now, Knight said.

"I think it's excellent to know the scholarship will continue," he said. "Any professional association can do it for a number of years and then say 'that's it,' so it's great to get the support from (PMAC)."

Andrew Silcox, vice-president for the central Ontario district of the Ontario Institute of PMAC, said the idea for the trust fund came from members of the local group of PMAC.

He said significant changes are being made and the local district "is to be dissolved."

"We wanted to make sure Conestoga students are taken care of," Silcox said.

Because the PMAC is a non-prof-

it organization, the money for the scholarship has generally always come from an annual golf tournament held by the association, he said.

In January, the annual student night for all materials management students was held at the Holiday Inn on Fairway Road in Kitchener, where the scholarship was awarded, Knight said.

He said he keeps the name of the scholarship recipient a secret until student night because he likes it to be a surprise.

This year's recipient of the scholarship was Brad Boakes, who said he was pleasantly surprised when he won.

"There were a lot of people involved, so I didn't expect to win."

Boakes said he thinks the scholarship and the trust fund are a good idea because it gives students something to strive for.

Eighty-one per cent was Boakes' mark for the principles of buying course, he said.

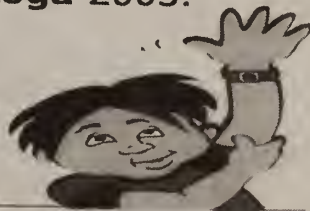
"If you do the work and put in the time," he said, "you'll get something out of it in the end."

As for what Boakes will be spending his \$1,000 on, he said he will probably use it to further his education.

## Volunteers NEEDED!

For Explore Conestoga 2005.

**Friday March 4  
Saturday March 5  
Sunday March 6**



This event is held on the last weekend of study week. It is a great opportunity to build your volunteer hours and gain valuable experience.



If interested please contact Herber Jaimes at:  
[hjaimes@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:hjaimes@conestogac.on.ca) or  
748-5220 ext. 3429



## Evil prevails throughout history

Jan. 27 was an important day.

It wasn't a time when sappy cards were mailed to lovers or champagne flutes were raised in toasts.

Instead, it commemorated a more somber occasion - the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, a Nazi death camp where 1.5 million Jews lost their lives during the Second World War. Overall, approximately 11 million people, including Jews, gypsies and others undesirable to the Third Reich, suffered a similar fate at the hands of the Nazis.

In 1944, the term genocide was coined by a Polish scholar to describe the extermination of six million Jews in the war, approximately 40 per cent of the race at that time, according to statistics in a Jan. 26 article in *The Record*. More specifically, the word refers to the deliberate massacre of many people from a particular ethnic group.

However, genocide was not a mid-20th century phenomenon. Instances of mass murder have been documented throughout history, such as the early 1900s Turkish attempt to purify its population of Armenian Christians, which left 1.5 million people dead.

It is a sad testament to humankind that since the birth of this odious word, its usage has become commonplace, and not just as a noun to describe past atrocities.

Between 1975 and 1979, two million Cambodians died as a result of their Communist leader's plan to implement communal farming in the style of Mao Tse-tung, whose regime in China was itself responsible for tens of millions of deaths.

In 1994, almost one million Tutsi Rwandans, one-tenth of the country's population, were brutally murdered by machete and grenade-wielding Hutus in a clash of rival ethnic groups.

From 1992 to 1995, two million Muslim Bosnians were systematically murdered by Serbian forces under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic.

Moreover, for the last two decades, ethno-religious conflict in Sudan has resulted in the death of approximately two million people and the displacement of countless more.

The Holocaust is long over, but the fate of many people today is as bleak as it was for the emaciated Jews in Auschwitz and Dachau, who were herded into homicidal gas chambers, their bodies later burned in crematoriums.

Sure, the "good" side won the war, but it did not prevail throughout the course of history. If it had, the lives of many may have been spared the bloody genocides to which they too succumbed.

At a recent session of the UN General Assembly, held in honour of the liberation of Auschwitz, Secretary General Kofi Annan said, "Terrible things are happening today in Darfur, Sudan. It is easy to say that 'Something must be done.' To say exactly what and when and how, and to do it, is much more difficult. But what we must not do is deny what is happening, or remain indifferent, as so many did when the Nazi factories of death were doing their ghastly work," according to a Jan. 25 article on [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).

You may question what you can do to make a difference. The answer is simple. Immerse yourself in news from Sudan and other conflict-torn countries. Understand that the blood of genocide victims is being shed as you read this article. And, express your abhorrence for these atrocities by petitioning the government, becoming involved with a human rights agency or discussing the topic with your family during dinner.

The choice to act is yours. However, if you allow yourself to remain complacent to the brutal murder of innocents, are you too not partly to blame?



Jen considers her summer vacation.

## Rural communities aren't ghost towns

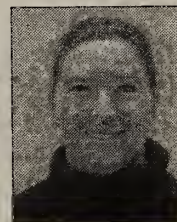
Brace yourself, I'm about to use words that are almost foreign to urbanized people: rural communities.

I bet now you're thinking overalls, pitchforks, hicks and rolling in the hay. Wrong. I've lived in a rural community for the entire 22 years of my life. I'm proud to be a country girl, but I despise the discrimination from people from the city who simply don't understand my way of life. Not only that, they come to my town and say things like, "This place is a ghost town," or "This place is way out in the boonies." Again, that is so wrong. I live in a small town called Ariss, which is located just outside of Guelph. It only takes me five minutes to drive from my house to Guelph. Not only that, but I'm part of my town's history and it hits me personally because I'm proud of where I'm from and I don't like to hear negativity from people.

But since the majority of people today are urbanized, it's inevitable.

So let me educate you both about my town and my life.

First of all, my town is not a ghost town. We have had a golf



Dawn Hasson

*Opinion*

course for the last 10 years called the Ariss Valley Golf and Country Club. Believe it or not, it used to be my father's beef cattle farm where I grew up. He sold it to the group of men who turned it into the golf course it is today.

I work part-time at the Ariss Village Variety store where I entertain those who come in trying to find friends who live in my area as well as those who are lost. Being lost is common among city people, and it's not their fault, since they don't know their way around a rural community.

My boss, Elizabeth Begg, is the owner and operator of the Ariss Village Variety store, which has been operating for almost 100 years. The store is also my town's post office, and residents from about 60 households must come to

pick up their mail. Two rural delivery routes serve another 530 homes in Ariss, including mine.

Why should you care? Because rural towns do have a history and some people prefer the country to the noisy, busy city.

You should also know that I'm certainly not what city people call a hick. I don't wear overalls, I don't chase people with pitchforks, my father has never tried to shoot my boyfriend, and no, I've never rolled in the hay.

I'm in my third year of the journalism - print and broadcast program here at Conestoga College. I have a part-time job, I clean my father's and my uncle's offices, I have a boyfriend who also lives in Ariss and I love to read fiction novels. Does that sound much different from a city person's life? The only difference is my background.

The only way to treat ignorance is with knowledge and now you have some.

So the next time you meet someone from the country, don't be too quick to judge him or her. You may learn something interesting.



### Letters are welcome

**Spoke** welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be signed and include the name and telephone number of the writer. Writers will be contacted for verification.

No unsigned letters will be published.

Letters should be no longer than 500 words.

**Spoke** reserves the right to edit any letter for publication.

Address correspondence to:

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**Web site:** [www.conestogac.on.ca/spoke](http://www.conestogac.on.ca/spoke)

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# Mature students a growing population

I recently had a five-minute wait for the bus that would shuttle me from the college to work that evening.

I wandered into the crowd of waiting students and surveyed the road to see whether the bus was on its way. I surveyed the crowd to see if I had any friends.

And, I did.

I saw a man, loitering outside the no smoking boundary, but I couldn't remember his name.

He seemed puzzled as I. He tilted his head, looking as confused as a tourist in a subway system.

I was afraid of being the strange woman who talks to random people at bus stops. But, after an awkward stare, I remembered.

I sauntered over and murmured a possible surname under my breath.

And, I was right.

I did know him and his name, but with this reassurance came a flood of distant memories and a tidal wave of questions.

"What are you doing here?" I scolded, with emphasis on the "here."

The strangeness was not really seeing an old acquaintance at the bus stop or partially forgetting his name.

It was because he had been my teacher. Not from my current institution, but from five years ago, when I was studying another vocation at a private college. In fact, it was another time, another life and another world completely.

He was waiting for the bus just like me, carrying a backpack and sporting a jacket and jeans gear. It was the backpack that caught my attention.

To answer my blunt invasion, he told me that he had quit teaching massage therapy and after years of travel he was back at school.

My school.

My former professor was now a first-year mechanical construction student at a college from which I would soon be graduating. The



Desiree  
Finhert

Opinion

tables had not merely turned, they were spinning.

The professor-turned-student said initially he had reservations about going back to school at 32, but that he was really enjoying his program. He wasn't even the eldest in his class.

I remember thinking the same thing when I had quit the massage program, was done travelling and was thumbing through the brochures to go back to school as a mature student.

Listening to the stories that my former professor shared during our ride to the mall put an uneasy notion in my head.

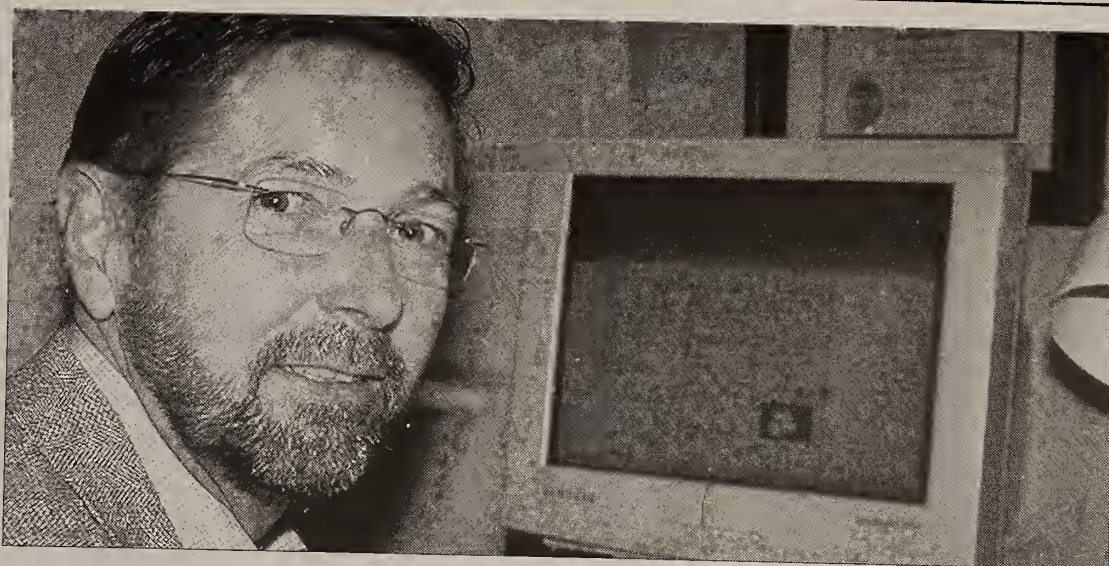
What if I'm back to school when I'm 32?

Mature students are a growing population at university and college campuses. More people are changing careers long before they're scheduled for a mid-life crisis.

What worried me is that I'm due to graduate in five months and the chance meeting with my former teacher leads me to believe that I should start thumbing the college brochure, before I write my final exams.

Unlike generations before me, changing careers has become common. Working at the same job, even working in the same field for 15 years or more has become passe. Being a Jacqueline of all trades, I'm guilty of the same inconsistency.

Of course, if I do go back to school in 10 years, there's a good chance I won't be the oldest person in my class and that the student body will be partially made up of former professors.



(Photo by Janet Morris)

Counsellor Rick Casey takes a breather from looking at the Student Services website. He said the site is a great tool for students looking for information.

## Website appeals to Velos generation

By JANET MORRIS

The new Student Services website is geared towards the Velos generation of students.

The term Velos generation comes from D-Code (www.d-code.com) literature created by Robert Barnard.

D-code is a strategy research and development company that has developed knowledge and expertise on the information age generations.

On the website the Velos generation is described as "getting more integrated, connected and mobile."

The counsellor who co-ordinates the website, Jennifer Meksula, said Student Services attempted to respond to this trend.

"We created a site that offered information without requiring visitors to explore the entire site."

The site was launched in the spring of 2004 and is organized in newspaper format for easier navigation.

The purpose of the website is to inform students of upcoming events on campus, provide connections to

interest groups and increase familiarity of a counselling environment.

Information about the resources available at Conestoga College and in the surrounding community is also included in the website.

The site was built in collaboration with all members of the counselling services team and members of the college's web development division.

All counsellors have input into the maintenance of the site and equal opportunity to post articles, announce upcoming events and post responses to world events, such as the tsunami.

Meksula said Student Services is always looking to include new information in order to respond to students' changing needs. "We want to introduce the services we offer as approachable and student centred."

One example of feedback suggested students struggle with creating and maintaining a relaxation routine, said Meksula.

"We are considering including a relaxation section that will provide

video instruction and an audio guide for practising relaxation techniques in the privacy of a student's own home."

Meksula said the feedback from students and faculty at the college has been positive. Praise for the website was also received at a conference for the Ontario College Counsellors in October.

"It's nice to receive positive feedback from your peers," said Meksula.

Counsellor Rick Casey said the site is more user friendly than similar websites he has visited.

"It's really easy to navigate and thorough," he said. "I think it's a great tool for students looking for information. They don't have to book time with a counsellor to begin getting help."

The process for making an appointment with a counsellor is described on the website, which can be accessed through the main college web page (www.conestogac.on.ca) and then selecting student resources and then counselling.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The article that appeared on the proposed student centre in the Jan. 31, 2005 edition of Spoke stated that a portion of the student priority fee would be used towards paying for the centre. I wish to clarify that the student priority fee cannot be used for

capital investment such as buildings, but must be used for the creation and enhancement of student services that I hope will be located in the student centre.

Fred Harris

Vice-president of student affairs

Conestoga College

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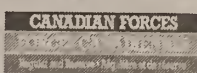
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# Region making plans to go green

By KRISTEN MCMURPHY

You won't be scraping your leftovers into the garbage for much longer.

Following in the footsteps of cities like Toronto and Guelph, Waterloo Region plans to launch a new program next fall to eliminate the amount of garbage accumulated in the region. This program will come in the form of a compost collection service in addition to our regular garbage and recyclables collection.

Toronto began its curbside compost collection in Etobicoke in September 2002. Known as the Green Bin program, residents put food scraps and other biodegradable items in a special composting pail. These are emptied into a larger outdoor container and collected weekly with the regular household garbage. This extra step in household garbage disposal reduces waste from landfills by using organic garbage material and turning it into compost.

The program was designed to cushion the impact that would be felt three months later when the city's Keele Valley landfill closed. This shutdown resulted in a 300 per cent increase in disposal costs for waste to be trucked to a private Michigan landfill. Nobody else wanted Toronto's garbage.

Over the past few years, the rest of Toronto has gradually jumped on the bandwagon and the city hopes to reach its goal of a 60 per cent diversion of waste by next year.

Guelph has had its Wet/Dry



(Photo by Kristen McMurphy)

K-W's recycling program is expanding next fall. The city hopes to reduce the amount of garbage collected by initiating a composting program.

waste management program, similar to the Green Bin program, since 1995. Ninety-eight per cent of the non-commercial population participates by sorting their garbage into colour-coded bags. Wet garbage,

such as food scraps, diapers and plants are placed in green plastic see-through bags. Milk cartons, glass and other dry items are thrown out in clear blue bags.

With both programs running

smoothly, it looks like it's about time Waterloo Region follows the example. Which is exactly what it is going to do.

Cari Howard is the project manager working on a household

organics pilot study for Waterloo Region. Howard says the project is in its research phase and is set to launch in the fall of 2006.

"Right now we're looking at the different systems available to us, deciding whether we should go with the Green Bin system used in Toronto, or something more similar to Guelph's Wet/Dry system."

Howard says the city is leaning towards the Green Bin system, but there is a downfall in the cost of distributing bins to households throughout the region.

The area's garbage situation is nowhere near as desperate as Toronto's, so the city is taking its time to choose a system that would be the most efficient and effective.

"We have a landfill (in Kitchener-Waterloo) available to us with 25 years of life left in it," Howard says in references to the city's delayed start on a composting project. "We haven't started a program like this yet because we're taking our time, researching the progress that similar programs are having," she says.

Until the anticipated program launch next fall, we can reduce the amount of garbage we dispose of by recycling glass and plastics and avoiding heavily-packaged products.

As far as community response goes, Howard says she gets a couple of phone calls every month from residents inquiring about the program, but she's not rushing to get the operation up and running.

"We want to do this right the first time and prevent any growing pains," she says.

## Aura reading a fascinating experience

By TIM MURPHY

A photo can tell you more about yourself than you think.

Touring the Kitchener Winter Psychic Fair at Bingeman's Park, I came across an interesting booth, one which would strike the eye of any aspiring photographer — an aura reader.

As I approach the woman operating the booth, before I can say hello, she speaks.

"I would love to take your photo," she said, adding she would not charge me for the experience.

Although the sign on this mysterious woman's booth indicates there is a \$20 fee, I step inside for a free photograph.

The woman is a temporary employee for First Star, a company which travels to various fairs in Ontario.

The aura-capturing system, a video recorder connected to a laptop computer, frames me, and I am then asked to remove any healing crystals or magnetic materials on my person.

Luckily, I left my healing crystals at home that day, what with Jupiter's location in relative position to the Moon and all.

Snap. She takes my photo, and despite my slack-jawed expression, she tells me I look good.

"Here," she says, handing me a white cloth of mystery. It is a Kleenex, and I am to wipe down my apparently sweaty hands, lest

they contaminate the "advanced kirlian aura-capturing system," a sensor which she tells me will analyse my bio-data.

I'm not quite sure what my bio-data is, but I can rest easy knowing it is about to be analysed.

"You're very adventurous and passionate about what you do," she says, preparing my personalized printout.

"I'm red," I observe, looking at the package she hands me.

What does that mean?

Reading through the chakra analysis package, I learn my personality traits include I like excitement and I am physical, energetic, competitive, a winner, sexual and an entrepreneur. I also have lots of willpower.

Apparently my aura is also quite large. You know what they say, big hands, big aura.

Be careful though, because those who dare enter my aura will be overwhelmed by my strong and powerful presence, not to mention my radiant energy. Perhaps my aura motivated the woman to give me the free reading?

My mind-body-spirit graph gives me some alarming news. Sixty per cent of my energy is focused on my body, 35 per cent on my mind and 10 per cent on my spirit. Perhaps the bio-date sensors need some recalibrating, but it appears I'm giving 105 per cent all the time. No wonder my girlfriend thinks I'm always so tired.

An aura chakra analysis can pro-

vide interesting and entertaining information about yourself.

Although the reading offered me no alarming insights into my emo-

tional-energetic state, the experience was fascinating.

Having your friends spend an evening making fun of your "prac-

tical, action-oriented loving approach" can also be interesting.

They'd better be careful, or I'll use my strong aura on them.

### COUNSELLOR'S CORNER: *Eating Disorders*

Did you know that one out of every hundred women might become **anorexic**? Estimates of the frequency of **bulimia** vary from five to twenty out of one hundred college-age women. Men also develop both disorders, but in much smaller numbers.

**Anorexia nervosa** is characterized by an all-consuming fear of "getting fat." There is an intense preoccupation with food, body size and sometimes compulsive exercising. Dieting can gradually lead to a loss exceeding 25% of original weight. Serious health issues such as cessation of menstruation, malnutrition and lowered heart rate occur. Some starve themselves to death.

**Bulimia** is a cycle of uncontrolled binge eating and purging through vomiting or the use of laxatives. This extremely debilitating pattern can, in more extreme cases, absorb nearly all of a person's time, energy and money, and lead to depression and isolation. Frequent vomiting can cause damage to the teeth, throat and esophagus. Kidney and cardiac problems are a danger.

An important first step in overcoming Eating Disorders is for the individual to acknowledge to herself and to a professional that a problem exists. Medical and psychological help is available in this community. Talk to a counsellor in Student Services or the nurse in the Health Services Office (Doon Campus only). One immediate benefit is the feeling of relief at no longer having to keep such an important part of one's life a secret.

*A Message from Student Services*

Visit our website <http://www.conestogac.on.ca/jsp/stserv/index.jsp>



# The ups and downs of a Winter Wonderland



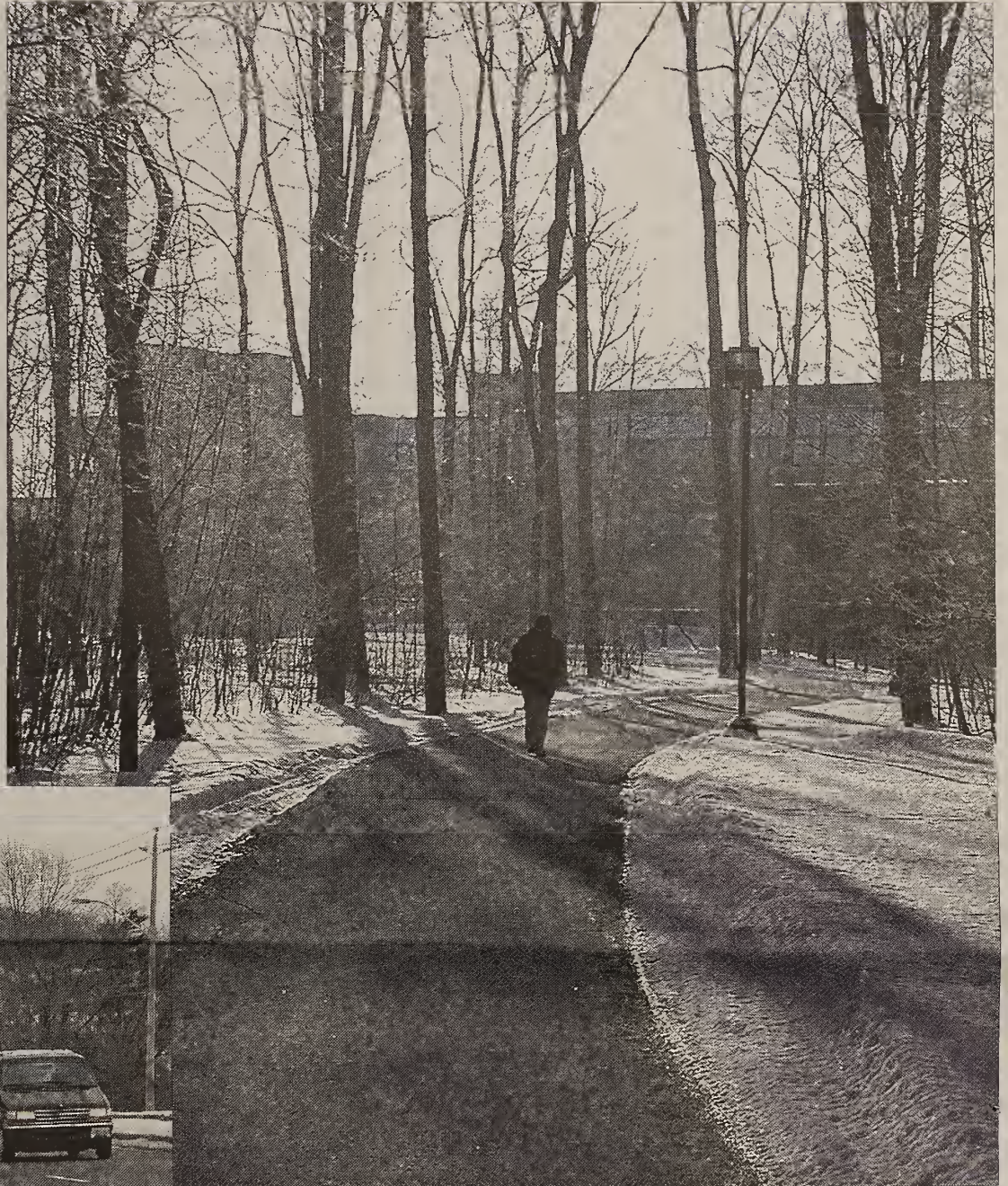
(Photo by Tim Murphy)

Above, slippery road conditions put a car in the snowbank in Conestoga's green parking lot on Jan. 24.

Below, with the widening of Homer Watson Boulevard between Blockline Road and Blears Road now complete, the commute for faculty, staff and students coming from Kitchener and Waterloo will be much easier and safer.



(Photo by Kate Battler)



(Photo by Denise Muller)

A student walks under trees covered in early morning frost along the path from the registrar's office to the college on Jan. 31.



(Photo by Melissa Hancock)

Tow truck drivers were busy on Jan. 23, helping motorists involved in accidents. Slippery conditions made roads dangerous for drivers, including this one who ended up in the ditch just east of the Highway 24 exit to Cambridge.



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## Group works towards improving women's health

By PAIGE HILTON

The Ontario Women's Health Council (OWHC) was established in 1998 to advise the provincial government on issues specifically affecting women's health.

Members of the council include women who are doctors at prestigious hospitals, and board members of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, just to name a few.

**"We fund a number of research scholars and we're really working to make sure that women's health gets on the government's agenda."**

*Marnie MacKinnon,  
chief operating officer for the  
Ontario Women's Health  
Council*

The OWHC's chair, Jane Pepino, is also the first female member of the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Commissioners of Police and a member of the Order of Canada.

The OWHC recently helped sponsor the ninth annual Women's Health Matters Forum and Expo in Toronto, a conference aimed at educating the public and raising awareness about the most recent goals, victories and problems concerning women's health.

Not only does the council work as an advocacy group to push for-

ward new legislation concerning women's health, but it funds numerous research projects to advance discoveries in the field.

Marnie MacKinnon, the chief operating officer for the OWHC, was enthusiastic about the council's work.

"We fund a number of research scholars and we're really working to make sure that women's health gets on the government's agenda," she said.

The council advises George Smitherman, the Ontario government's minister of health and long-term care, and states their two main goals are to act as the voice of Ontario women to advocate for premium health care, and to keep society and the health-care system accountable for women's health at each stage of their lives.

According to their literature, the council has released numerous reports of women's health issues, including a report concerning acute care, an Ontario women's health status report and a report outlining the best practices in the use of a hysterectomy.

Funding research projects are a primary part of the council's work, and since 2000 they have funded projects aimed at specific areas of women's health.

Some of these include projects concerning mental health treatment, prevention of unplanned pregnancy, breast and gynecological cancer screening and information services, healthy eating, physical activity and positive self-images for young women.

For more information on the OWHC, visit [www.women-healthcouncil.com](http://www.women-healthcouncil.com).

## Chinese New Year gets underway Feb. 9

By JASON SONSER

As many of us with western traditions wind down from Christmas and the start of the new year, there are others who are either still celebrating or preparing for upcoming holidays.

A specific holiday that is approaching is the Chinese New Year. Traditionally, celebrations begin when the first moon of the lunar calendar appears, which happens sometime between late January and early February.

This year, the Chinese New Year begins on Feb. 9, and according to Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)), an online encyclopedia, the celebration lasts for 15 days.

The site also says "New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family," and the first three days of the 15-day celebration are the most important.

During the first three days of the new year, friends and family get together to visit. On the last day of celebrations, there is a Lantern Festival which can be very colourful.

The Chinese Zodiac is associated with the Chinese New Year and each year with one of the 12 animals of the zodiac is associated with it.

This year, according to the Chinese Zodiac, is the Year of the Rooster. According to New Tang Dynasty TV's website (<http://newyeargala.ndtv.com/2005/en/index.htm>), the Year of the

Rooster will bring "happiness, colour and drama, but this has to be balanced with good old-fashioned common sense and tried and tested values."

Not only do the animals of the Chinese Zodiac reflect the upcoming year, they also represent common traits of those born under that animal.

The 12 animals of the zodiac are the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig.

There are many descriptions of each animal that vary from source to source. There are commonalities between each description, however.

Those born under the rat (1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996) are said to be full of charm, hard workers and perfectionists at times.

People born under the ox (1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997) have patience and speak little, and are known for their tempers.

Those born under the tiger (1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998) are known to be sensitive and courageous, but they are known for their short tempers as well.

Rabbits (1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999) are tactful, ambitious, articulate, and reserved.

Those born under the dragon (1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000) are known for their excitement, stubbornness and energy. They're also known for

their trustworthiness, confidence and honesty.

Those born a snake (1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001) are known to be vain and selfish, but their wisdom and ability to sympathize make up for this.

People born in the year of the horse (1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002) can be perceptive, cheerful and talkative.

Rams (1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003) are passionate, religious and compassionate. However, they can be shy and pessimistic at times.

Those born a monkey (1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004) are flexible and clever people and are very inventive.

Roosters (1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005) are talented people who are very devoted to whatever they're doing, and can be eccentric.

People born in the year of the dog (1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006) are honest and loyal people, but are known to be very stubborn.

Those born in the year of the pig (1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007) are very honest and chivalrous people, but are known to be quick-tempered as well.

If you're ever looking for a little more insight as to what type of person you are and want to go beyond your typical western astrology, the Chinese Zodiac can give great insight to who you are.

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TERM OF OFFICE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2005 - AUGUST 31, 2006.

#### ACADEMIC MEMBER

All persons employed by the Board of Governors, Conestoga College, on a full-time or part-time basis, who are neither an Administrative nor a Support Staff Member.

TERM OF OFFICE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2005 - AUGUST 31, 2008.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE MEMBER

All persons employed by the board of Governors, Conestoga College, on a full-time or part-time basis, who are neither an Academic nor a Support Staff Member.

TERM OF OFFICE: BOARD MEETING IN MAY 2005 TO AUGUST 31, 2006.

The terms of reference for these elected internal members are the same as those for externally appointed members of the Board of Governors. Nomination forms will be posted on February 18, 2005. Nomination forms will also be available in the office of the Secretary-Treasurer of the Board (Kevin Mullian).

Closing date for nominations: MARCH 10, 2005

Lists of nominees to be posted on campus bulletin boards on March 18, 2005.

ELECTION DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2005



# The Notebook now on DVD

By DAWN HASSON

This past summer, we were treated to one of the greatest love stories of all time.

Now we will be able to watch it again and again.

The Notebook, which was released in theatres June 25, will be coming out on DVD Feb. 8. It will be right on time for Valentine's Day if any guys are looking for a nice gift to get their special ladies.

The movie is based on the New York Times bestselling novel by American author Nicholas Sparks, who is well-known for his romantic fiction novels. His other works include A Walk to Remember and Message in a Bottle, which were

also made into popular movies.

The story is solely for women, as it chronicles the separation and reunification of two star-crossed lovers. So, in other words, guys may not be too interested in this one.

The movie stars Canadian actors Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams who play Noah Calhoun and Allie Nelson. Both actors were born in London, Ont.

The movie-version of the story begins with the separation of Calhoun and Nelson. Then Calhoun decides to live in North Carolina after serving in the Second World War. By chance, he meets again with his socialite ex-lover, Nelson. After facing nearly a decade apart, the spark between them is rekindled, but Nelson is soon forced to choose between the greatest love of all and the restraints caused by her upper class life.

Their story has been captured in a special notebook, which an elderly

man reads to a woman who lives in a retirement home.

McAdams is known for her roles in the movies Mean Girls and The Hot Chick. Gosling had roles in Murder by Numbers, Remember the Titans and The United States of Leland.

Nick Cassavetes, who worked on 2002's John Q, 1997's She's So Lovely and 1996's Unhook the Stars, directed the movie.

Special DVD features include deleted scenes, the casting for the roles of Calhoun and Nelson, a profile on Nicholas Sparks and a piece on the location for the filming of the movie.

A package is being offered on the Internet for \$42.95 which includes the DVD, a hardcover version of the novel and a special notebook and pen based on the movie.

For more information, visit the official website at [www.thenotebookmovie.com](http://www.thenotebookmovie.com).



(Internet photo)

Canadian actors Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams light up the screen in the hit movie The Notebook.

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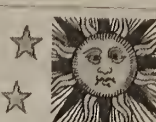
## Horoscope

Week of Feb. 7, 2005



**Aries**  
March 21 - April 19

Just like the Killers do, you look on the Mr. Brightside. You are intrinsically positive and you share your proactive comments with everyone. If there's a solution to be found you'll find it!



**Libra**  
September 23 - October 22

You are sexually satiated. Now you need to look for other means of fulfillment. Let some of your talents spill into the other areas of your life and you will find satisfaction.



**Taurus**  
April 20 - May 20

You are pragmatic in nature, clinging to facts rather than fiction. You're practically methodic in your day-to-day rituals and this type of routine works well for you.



**Scorpio**  
October 23 - November 21

You have been carrying an unwieldy chip on your shoulder. Dump that excess weight and get on with it. Try seeing things from other perspectives; it will be restorative to your outcomes.



**Gemini**  
May 21 - June 21

You are on a bright path, fo shizzle! Snoop wants you to keep it rhythm and gangsta when it comes to takin' care yo buzizzle. Do this and your week will be a masterpiece.



**Sagittarius**  
November 22 - December 21

You have been spellbound and left breathless. Love is definitely around the corner for you and if it's already there, it's going to get better, deeper and more meaningful.



**Cancer**  
June 22 - July 22

People who brag need to be put in their place sometimes. Try being humble when it comes to your successes; people will be more receptive to celebration when you stop being a grandstander.



**Capricorn**  
December 22 - January 19

Birth and rebirth have been tenuously important to you. These themes will become considerably more powerful as a life-changing event draws nearer.



**Leo**  
July 23 - August 22

Fortunately you are a rational person and cling to schedules and level-headedness. You are prudent and it works for you. Try to keep your anal-retentive traits on the light side to keep life fun.



**Aquarius**  
January 20 - February 18

Everyone had you pegged as lazy, but you happen to be one of the most productive types of people out there. You have an ease about your hard-working attitude that makes it seem simple.



**Virgo**  
August 23 - September 22

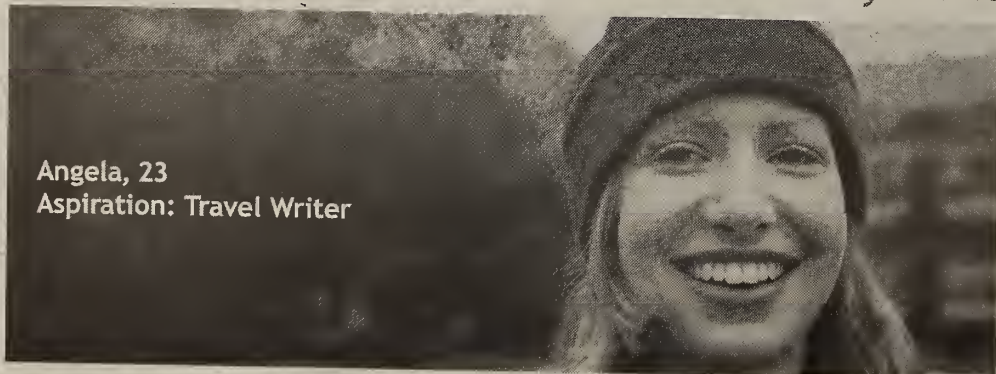
Two words for you this week, rude and spectacle - don't be either. While you may have every opportunity to take the lesser road when dealing with problems, try your best to resist.



**Pisces**  
February 19 - March 20

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Angela, 23  
Aspiration: Travel Writer

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Janet Morris is a 2nd-year journalism student in tune with the universe.



# First half of NBA season exciting

By BRENT GERHART

As the 2004-05 NBA season surpassed its halfway point, one thing was for sure, the first half produced a fair share of excitement.

Whether it is the exciting turnaround of the Phoenix Suns, Shaq dominating in his new Eastern conference home or Kobe Bryant's inability to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a solid record, the season has had it all, and more.

The season started off with a bang, as it was not even three weeks old when the Indiana Pacers took part in a Nov. 19 bench-clearing brawl with the reigning NBA champions, the Detroit Pistons and their fans.

The much publicized event occurred when Pacers forward Ron Artest had a fan throw beer on him while he lay on the timekeepers' table. The event provoked Artest to run into the crowd and attack Pistons supporters.

Overall, Artest was suspended for 73 games (the remainder of the season), Stephen Jackson and Jermaine O'Neal were suspended for 30 and 25 games for getting involved in Artest's altercation, and Anthony Johnson was suspended for five games for doing the same.

The Pacers' Reggie Miller and Detroit's Chauncey Billups, Eldin Campbell and Derrick Coleman

were also all suspended, but for one game each.

The surprise of this year's season so far may be the play of the Phoenix Suns.

During the off-season, Phoenix signed unrestricted free agent, and Surrey, B.C. native, Steve Nash, and the move is paying dividends as Nash is an early favourite for MVP honours.

Last season the Suns finished second last in the NBA's Western conference. However, this season the guard nicknamed Kid Canada has helped guide his new team to first place in the Pacific division and, as of Jan. 31, they were tied for first overall in the Western Conference standings.

Another team benefiting from an off-season acquisition is the Miami Heat. The Heat obtained one of the game's most dominating players, former Los Angeles Lakers centre Shaquille O'Neal.

Since his arrival in Miami, O'Neal has averaged 22.9 points per game. Although the number may be four points below his 26.9 career average, it is still 1.4 points above his 21.5 average of last season.

More points are not the only thing O'Neal has brought to the Heat.

With the help of Dwayne Wade and his 23.5 points-per-game average, Miami is dominating a lack-

lustre Eastern conference and is already only nine wins away from matching its season total of the 2003-04 season.

O'Neal's former team, the Los Angeles Lakers, have been anything but their usual self this season.

Since losing O'Neal, future hall of famer Karl Malone and guards Derek Fisher and Gary Payton, the Lakers franchise player, Kobe Bryant, has barely been able to lead his team over the .500 mark.

The Toronto Raptors have continued their streaky play this season, however, it has been without former fan favourite Vince Carter who was sent to the New Jersey Nets in a three-player and two first-round draft pick deal on Dec. 17.

Now being led by the 20-year-old Chris Bosh and Jalen Rose, the Raptors may be more than a few games below the .500 mark, but they are still in playoff contention in the struggling Eastern conference's Atlantic division.

On Feb. 20, the NBA will hold the 2005 All-Star game and although a Raptor will not make the Eastern conference squad, the game will have plenty of intensity as it will boast such exciting players as NBA points-per-game leader Allen Iverson, as well as Yao Ming, Tracy McGrady and LeBron James.



(Internet photo)

Steve Nash is an early favourite for MVP honours. He was signed during the off-season by the Phoenix Suns.

## AHL all-stars take centre stage

By BRENT GERHART

The American Hockey League (AHL) is enjoying the spotlight, thanks to the NHL lockout. And they expect the light to shine even brighter at their all-star game.

On Feb. 14, Manchester, N.H., home of the Los Angeles Kings AHL affiliate, the Manchester Monarchs, will host the 2005 Dodge AHL All-Star Classic at a sold-out Verizon Wireless Arena.

As opposed to the NHL's usual Eastern vs. Western conference all-star format, its minor league affiliate, the AHL, has become known for its Canadian AHL All-Stars vs. PlanetUSA format over its 69 seasons.

Although, at first glance, the game may seem to disclude non-North American born players, PlanetUSA contains both American born and players from the rest of the world.

Players representing Canada in this year's game include the AHL's leading scorer, Jason Spezza (Binghamton Senators), Jay Boumeester (San Antonio Rampage), Mike Cammelleri and goaltender Mathieu Garon (Manchester Monarchs), Patrice Bergeron (Providence Bruins) and Kyle Wellwood (St. John's Maple Leafs).

Claude Noel (Milwaukee Admirals) will coach the Canadian AHL All-Stars.

Players such as Zach Parise (Albany River Rats), Andy Hilbert (Providence Bruins), goaltender Kari Lehtonen (Chicago Wolves), Dustin Brown (Manchester Monarchs) and Mikko Koivu (Houston Aeros), younger brother of Montreal Canadiens captain, Saku Koivu, will represent PlanetUSA.

Bruce Boudreau (Manchester Monarchs) will coach PlanetUSA.

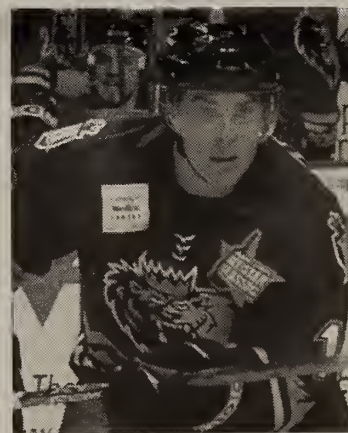
Since 1995, 92 per cent of hockey's young guns who have competed in the AHL all-star game have suited up in the NHL, including the 2003-2004 Art Ross award winner, Martin St. Louis, as well as Pavol Demitra, Steve Sullivan, Zdeno Chara, Daniel Briere, Marc Savard and goaltenders Tomas Vokoun and

Miikka Kiprusoff.

Much like the NHL's all-star weekend, the all-star classic is just one event in two days of festivities.

The AHL All-Star Skills Competition will include players from PlanetUSA competing against the Canadian AHL All-Stars. Both teams will compete in seven separate contests including fastest skater, hardest shot, breakaway relay and more.

The AHL skills competition will kick off the festivities on Feb. 13 at 7:05 p.m. and the AHL Dodge All-Star Classic is scheduled for the same time on Feb. 14. The game can be viewed in more than 140 million homes in Canada and the U.S. on Rogers SportsNet and ESPN 2.



(Internet photo)

Mike Cammelleri is representing Canada on this year's Canadian AHL All-Stars team.

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